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ABSTRACT

Conditions in higher education in Michigan and the role of the Governor's Commission on the Future of Higher Education in Michigan are highlighted. The average college tuition rate in Michigan is the highest in the nation, and a critical maintenance and equipment problem exists. The Commission is composed of knowledgeable persons without vested interests in higher education; more than half are graduates of Michigan colleges and universities. The Commission will seek input from every segment of the educational community in the following key areas: students, faculty, trustees, legislators, administrators, labor specialists, and corporate and philanthropic leaders. In beginning its study, the Commission reviewed previous reports that had been completed in the state during 1958-1980. Five basic concerns framed the current report: improving the quality of higher education, increasing the accessibility and affordability of higher education, maintaining diversity and reducing unnecessary duplication, defining the role of colleges in promoting the state's economic revitalization, and defining and supporting the roles of different types of institutions. Areas of assessment include: instruction, research, access, school-business cooperation and economic development, and financial support for higher education. (SW)

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PRESENTATION TO THE ASSOCIATION FOR
THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, March 14, 1984
Chicago, Illinois

PATRICIA WIDMAYER, Ph.D Executive Director

MICHIGAN GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

[FROM LEAN TIMES TO ENROLLMENT DECLINES: THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN]

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Annual Meeting—March 12-14, 1984—Conrad Hilton
Chicago, Illinois

PRESENTATION TO

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

MARCH 14, 1984

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

PATRICIA WIDMAYER, Ph.D. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MICHIGAN GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON THE

FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

[FROM LEAN TIMES TO ENROLLMENT DECLINES: THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN]

DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS. IT IS INDEED AN HONOR TO BE ABLE TO JOIN YOU THIS MORNING TO DISCUSS THE STRATEGY WE ARE USING IN MICHIGAN TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF MICHIGAN'S HIGHER EDUCATION ENTERPRISE. IT IS PARTICULARLY GRATIFYING TO BE SHARING THIS AT A TIME WHEN EDUCATION IS AT THE TOP OF THE PUBLIC AGENDA BOTH IN OUR STATE AND THE NATION. THIS INTEREST GIVES US AS EDUCATORS AN EXCITING AND CHALLENGING OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE OUR GOALS AND MISSIONS IN EACH STATE FOR THEIR SUITABILITY TO THAT STATE'S NEEDS AND TO REESTABLISH A COMMITMENT TO THE STRENGTH OF THE SYSTEM BY PUBLIC POLICY MAKERS AND THE PEOPLE OF OUR STATES.

IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THAT DISCUSSION AND DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION, GOVERNOR JAMES J. BLANCHARD APPOINTED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER IN SEPTEMBER 1983, A 27 MEMBER COMMISSION TO REPORT THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS BY OCTOBER 1984. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNOR HAS MADE SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES IN THE FY84 AND FY85 APPROPRIATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN ORDER TO STABILIZE THE SYSTEM WHILE THE COMMISSION CONDUCTS A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW.

LET ME HIGHLIGHT FOR YOU SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THAT PRECIPITATED THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN. TUITION AT MICHIGAN'S 15 PUBLIC, 4-YEAR UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES HAS JUMPED 82 PERCENT IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS TO AN AVERAGE OF $1,572. ALTHOUGH NOT AS STEEP, TUITIONS HAVE ALSO INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY IN OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

STUDIES SHOW MICHIGAN'S AVERAGE TUITION RATE IS THE HIGHEST IN THE NATION; MORE THAN $600 ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE FOR 4-YEAR PUBLIC COLLEGES. FURTHER, ALTHOUGH ENROLLMENTS HAVE NOT YET DROPPED, THERE IS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE WE MAY FIND OURSELVES OVERBUILT WITHIN THE NEXT DECADE AS THE POPULATION POOL DROPS. IT ALSO APPEARS THAT THERE IS A CRITICAL MAINTENANCE AND EQUIPMENT PROBLEM THAT COULD EXCEED $200 MILLION JUST IN OUR 4-YEAR INSTITUTIONS.

YET THOSE FIGURES TELL ONLY PART OF THE STORY OF THE PROBLEMS FACING HIGHER EDUCATION. CLEARLY PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN OUR SYSTEM HAS SLIPPED. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT CONFIDENCE BE RESTORED.

WHEN GOVERNOR BLANCHARD ESTABLISHED THE COMMISSION LAST YEAR, TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES AND MORE, HE SET OUT SOME BROAD GUIDELINES FOR POSITIONING MICHIGAN'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM AT THE EDGE OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

AMONG OTHER THINGS, HE DECLARED IMMEDIATELY, THAT MONEY ALONE IS NOT THE ANSWER AND THAT WE SHOULD SEEK AND CONSIDER EVERY PROPOSAL POSSIBLE TO IMPROVE THE ACCESS, QUALITY AND AFFORDABILITY OF OUR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.

IN CHOOSING THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION, GOVERNOR BLANCHARD FELT IT WAS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CITIZENS OF MICHIGAN TO SEEK COMMISSIONERS WHO HAD NO CURRENT VESTED INTEREST IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM; BUT THEY HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR SYSTEM AND THEY ALL CARE DEEPLY ABOUT EDUCATION. THEN HE CHARGED THE COMMISSION TO CONSULT EXTENSIVELY WITH THOSE MOST IMMEDIATELY INVOLVED.

THEREFORE, YOU WILL FIND NO CURRENT COLLEGE PRESIDENTS, TRUSTEES, ADMINISTRATORS OR ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES AS MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION. THE GOVERNOR WANTED FRESH, TOUGH, GUTSY, IMAGINATIVE IDEAS THAT WOULD NOT BE LIMITED BY ONE'S AFFILIATION OR EMPLOYER.

YOU WILL FIND ATTORNEYS, PUBLISHERS, RETAILERS, CORPORATE ADMINISTRATORS, FORMER COLLEGE PRESIDENTS, AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM AGRICULTURE, THE PROFESSIONS AND ORGANIZED LABOR. IT IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE MOST DIVERSE GROUPS EVER ASSEMBLED IN MICHIGAN TO STUDY EDUCATION.

TAKE JIM ROBINSON, THE CHAIRMAN AS AN EXAMPLE. JIM ATTENDED A JUNIOR COLLEGE, A STATE 4-YEAR UNIVERSITY, A STATE LAW SCHOOL AND NOW IS SENIOR PARTNER IN ONE OF DETROIT'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS LAW FIRMS AFTER SERVING A STINT AS U.S. DISTRICT ATTORNEY.

OR MICHELE HUNT --

OR WILLIAM BYRUM --

I WANT TO STRESS THESE BACKGROUNDS ARE TYPICAL -- NOT ATYPICAL.

SINCE OCTOBER, THE GROUP HAS MET A HALF DOZEN TIMES AS A COMMISSION AND HAS HAD NUMEROUS COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN SPECIAL KEY AREAS.

MORE THAN 20 POSITIONS OR DESCRIPTIVE PAPERS HAVE BEEN PRESENTED TO THE COMMISSION COVERING A VARIETY OF TOPIC AREAS, INCLUDING: OCCUPATIONAL SUPPLY AND DEMAND; CAPITAL OUTLAY; ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS AND DEMOGRAPHICS; MINORITY ACCESS; K-12 STUDIES; AND MORE.

THE COMMISSION STAFF HAS SOUGHT OR WILL SEEK INPUT FROM EVERY SEGMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY IN THESE KEY AREAS:

STUDENTS

FACULTY

TRUSTEES

LEGISLATORS

ADMINISTRATORS

LABOR SPECIALISTS

CORPORATE AND PHILANTHROPIC LEADERS.

I AM ALSO CONFIDENT WE WILL BENEFIT FROM THE FRESH IDEAS AND THE IMAGINATIVE THINKING THAT IS BEING SHOWN IN THIS PROCESS. IT'S AMAZING THE TOUGH QUESTIONS THEY ARE ASKING. IT'S ALSO REFRESHING TO HAVE EDUCATIONAL JARGON QUESTIONED AND ACRONYMS ASSAULTED.

I WANT TO STRESS THAT ALTHOUGH COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF ARE NOT EMPLOYEES OR CLOSELY AFFILIATED WITH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, MOST OF THEM ARE PRODUCTS OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS.

MORE THAN HALF OF THE COMMISSIONERS ARE GRADUATES OF MICHIGAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND ALL BUT ONE STAFF MEMBER ATTENDED A STATE UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE.

I WANT TO UNDERLINE THAT THE COMMISSIONERS REALIZE THEY HAVE BEFORE THEM A MONUMENTAL TASK. ONE THAT WILL SET THE TONE AND TENOR OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AS IT ENTERS THE 21ST CENTURY.

I'M SURE IF YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH THIS GROUP AS I HAVE, BOTH AS A WHOLE AND INDIVIDUALLY -- YOU WILL COME AWAY WITH THE SAME OPINION I HAVE THAT THEY ARE MORE THAN UP TO THE CHALLENGE.

AS THE COMMISSION BEGAN ITS STUDY, ONE OF THE FIRST ITEMS THE COMMISSIONERS WANTED TO BE BRIEFED ON WAS WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PREVIOUS REPORTS THAT HAD BEEN COMPLETED IN MICHIGAN.

THEY WANTED TO LEARN FROM HISTORY RATHER THAN REPEAT IT, SO THEY COULD AVOID COMMON PITFALLS AND SEE WHAT MADE CERTAIN REPORTS MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN OTHERS. AND, FRANKLY THEY WANTED TO KNOW WHAT MADE OTHER REPORTS FAIL MISERABLY.

THE COMMISSION CAREFULLY REVIEWED THE FOLLOWING REPORTS:

- JOHN DALE RUSSELL REPORT OF 1958
- THE DAVIS REPORT OF 1964
- THE CITIZENS COMMISSION OF 1965
- THE STATE BOARD REPORT OF 1970
- THE SIEDMAN REPORT OF 1974, AND
- THE AGEE REPORT OF 1980.

FROM THAT REVIEW AND FROM CAREFUL DISCUSSION WITH EACH COMMISSIONER, FIVE BASIC QUESTIONS THAT WOULD SET THE SCOPE OF THEIR REPORT WERE DEVELOPED.

THESE ARE:

- HOW CAN THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION BE ENHANCED?
- HOW CAN HIGHER EDUCATION BECOME MORE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE?
- HOW CAN HIGHER EDUCATION MAINTAIN DIVERSITY AND REDUCE UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION?
- HOW CAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONTRIBUTE TO MICHIGAN'S ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION?
- HOW CAN THE DIFFERING ROLES AND MISSIONS BE DEFINED FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS AND HOW CAN METHODS OF SUPPORT APPROPRIATE TO EACH BE DEVELOPED?

THESE QUESTIONS HAVE REMAINED THE FRAMEWORK FOR EVERYTHING THE COMMISSION HAS REVIEWED SUBSEQUENTLY.

MORE THAN ANYTHING THE COMMISSION HAS STRESSED RECOMMENDING IDEAS AND CHANGES THAT WILL KEEP THE REPORT FROM A TOP SHELF AND IN THE HANDS OF PEOPLE WHO CAN INSTITUTE CHANGES.

TO HELP THEM DO THAT THE COMMISSION, AT ITS FIRST MEETING PUT TOGETHER SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OR GUIDELINES THAT WOULD HELP THEM WORK THROUGH THIS PROCESS.

LET ME BRIEFLY OUTLINE THE AREAS WE ARE EXAMINING FOR YOU:

* THE FIRST GENERAL AREA IS INSTRUCTION AND RESEARCH. THE COMMISSION BELIEVES THE GOAL OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN SHOULD BE THREEFOLD: TO PREPARE INDIVIDUALS TO ASSUME PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT, TO LEAD SATISFYING LIVES AND TO BE EFFECTIVE CITIZENS AND LEADERS.

TO ACHIEVE THIS IN THE COMING DECADES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO INCREASE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND PROGRAM QUALITY AT EACH PUBLICLY FUNDED INSTITUTION.

AND, ALTHOUGH THE COMMISSION EXPECTS THE OUTCOME OF A SECONDARY EDUCATION WILL BE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF BASIC READING, WRITING AND CALCULATION SKILLS, HIGHER EDUCATION MUST ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION FOR NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS AND STUDENTS NEEDING SPECIAL ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THE RECENT "BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION" PROPOSED BY THE STATE BOARD PROPOSES STANDARDS THAT COULD MINIMIZE THE NEED FOR REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION AT THE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

* SECOND, THE COMMISSION BELIEVES IT IS CRUCIAL THAT STATE POLICY RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANT ROLE PLAYED BY QUALITY RESEARCH (BASIC, PURE AND APPLIED) IN TEACHING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IN AFFECTING THE ENTIRE HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT AND METHODS MUST BE FOUND TO ENHANCE THAT EFFORT.

* THIRD, THE COMMISSION IS CONCERNED WITH ACCESS. THE COMMISSION BELIEVES THAT POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SHOULD NOT BE DENIED TO ANY STUDENT IN MICHIGAN BECAUSE OF LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

FURTHER, EQUAL ACCESS AND MAXIMUM CAREER OPTIONS SHOULD BE ENSURED REGARDLESS OF SEX, RACE, AGE, ETHNICITY OR HANDICAP. ONE NATIONAL EXPERT WHO ADDRESSED THE COMMISSION FRANKLY TOLD THE COMMISSIONERS THAT IT IS NOT ONLY JUST, BUT IN HIGHER EDUCATION'S OWN BEST INTEREST TO ATTRACT MINORITIES TO HELP HOLD THE LINE ON DIMINISHING ENROLLMENTS. HE NOTED ONE CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY THAT HAD A FRESHMAN CLASS WITH MORE THAN 25 PERCENT ASIAN AMERICANS.

THESE ARE AMBITIOUS GOALS THAT MUST FIND REALITY IN THE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS.

- FOURTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO HIGHER EDUCATION WILL ALSO BE INTENSLY REVIEWED. MAXIMIZING THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ENTERPRISE AND BUSINESS/INDUSTRY IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IS ESSENTIAL. WE MUST ELIMINATE EXISTING BARRIERS AND DEVELOP CATALYSTS FOR COOPERATION AND FOSTERING JOINT VENTURES BETWEEN OUR UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS POSSIBLY AS AN INCENTIVE SHOULD BE DESIGNED FOR THOSE AREAS OFFERING THE GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR ECONOMIC EXPANSION, NEW INDUSTRY CREATION OR DEVELOPING NEW RESOURCES IN MICHIGAN.

THE COMMISSION ALSO BELIEVES IT IS VITAL TO MICHIGAN'S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TO IMPROVE THE STRENGTH AND NATIONAL STANDING OF MICHIGAN'S RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS. THE COMMISSIONERS HAVE A COMMON GOAL OF ASSURING OUR NATIONAL IMAGE AND REPUTATION IS ENHANCED.

IT IS ALSO IMPERATIVE WE INTEGRATE JOB TRAINING AND RE-TRAINING WITH OTHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. LET ME SAY THAT I KNOW MANY ADMINISTRATORS FEEL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES CAN PLAY IS A TRENDY ISSUE. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE IT IS SOMETHING THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN GOING ON AND WILL CONTINUE. THIS GIVES US OPPORTUNITY TO NURTURE AND ENCOURAGE IT.

IN THE AREA OF PUBLIC SERVICE, THE CONSULTING SERVICES AND RESOURCES OF MICHIGAN HIGHER EDUCATION MUST BE USED IN ACHIEVING STATE REVITALIZATION GOALS AS WELL AS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. THE INTERACTION -- CLOSE INTERACTION -- OF OUR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS WITH THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE IS IMPERATIVE.

* AND, ONE LAST POINT -- IT IS CRITICAL THAT PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT AND FEDERAL RESEARCH FUNDING FOR MICHIGAN'S HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BE EXPANDED.

THESE ARE ALL VITAL TO OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORT.

FINALLY, THE INSTITUTIONAL MISSIONS OF OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WILL RECEIVE SCRUTINY FROM THE COMMISSIONERS. THEY BELIEVE CLEARLY DEFINED ROLES AND MISSIONS SHOULD EXIST FOR EACH INSTITUTION.

GREATER COOPERATION AMONG ALL MICHIGAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ALSO BE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED. FORTUNATELY, THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASED AND HEIGHTENED AWARENESS OF THE NECESSITY FOR THIS COOPERATION.

TO ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS, IT HAS BEEN RECOMMENDED THAT A MECHANISM BE DEVELOPED TO INCREASE COOPERATION, REDUCE UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION AND RELATE THE GOALS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM TO THE GOALS OF MICHIGAN. THIS COULD BE SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS INCREASED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKING TOGETHER.

THE COMMISSION HAS ALSO BEEN CHARGED WITH EVALUATING FINANCING AND CAPITAL OUTLAY NEEDS IN THE CONTEXT OF QUALITY INSTRUCTION, PROFESSIONAL SUPPLY AND DEMAND PROJECTIONS AND REVITALIZATION GOALS FOR THE ENTIRE STATE.

IN THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF WILL BE WORKING TOGETHER TO PUT TOGETHER A REPORT THAT IS TOUGH, GUTSY AND IMAGINATIVE AND MAKES SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS.

HOWEVER, IF IT IS TO BE A SUCCESS; IF IT IS TO NOT GATHER DUST ON A TOP SHELF; IF IT IS NOT TO BE CALLED JUST ANOTHER STATE REPORT; IF WE WANT PEOPLE TO TAKE IT SERIOUSLY; IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY WE HAVE INPUT AND INVOLVEMENT FROM COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PEOPLE AND CITIZENS ACROSS OUR STATE. THE PROCESS IS AS CRITICAL AS THE PRODUCT.

OUR SUCCESS IN THIS ENDEAVOR IS CRUCIAL. AS GOVERNOR BLANCHARD SAID IN HIS STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS, OUR HUMAN RESOURCES ARE MICHIGAN'S FUTURE--AND OUR INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION IS THE BEST INVESTMENT WE CAN MAKE IN THE FUTURE OF OUR STATE.